

YOUR WEEK IN CHINA'S CAPITAL

今日北京

## BEIJING TODAY

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## MI Buries Blunders in Big Sales

Killer marketing strategy put MI on top; lack of innovation may cause its fall. **Page 4**



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Poor pay, no respect and no hope of promotion make rural teaching thankless. **Page 5**



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## Rural Renewal

The Beijing Municipal Commission of Tourism Development is out to develop tourism in 24 villages including Gubei Shui-zhen, Lingshui village and Cuandixia.

Most are located in the western hills of Mentougou district, where they preserve the traditional Beijing yards long lost in the downtown area. **Page 2**

## College Students Draw Online Credit to Shop

BY DIAO DIAO

**A**libaba's Taobao recorded 91.2 billion yuan in sales on the year's biggest shopping day: November 11.

But it wasn't merely salary workers blowing their savings on heavily discounted goods: many poor students spent heavily as well.

Xiaojia is a postgraduate student who studies engineering. He purchased many consumer electronic devices using his credit card, platform credit and an online credit line offered by several shopping sites.

In total, he spent 23,000 yuan in credit.

Xiaojia said postgraduate students are given a 1,200 yuan allowance and

his basic living costs come to 1,117 yuan every month.

Another student, Xiaosong, bought a computer using one website's online credit line and will pay 599 yuan per month until the loan is paid off.

Many students reported taking advantage of the credit lines offered by websites to spend heavily. Several only require a user to enter their personal information and do not ask for a copy of the user's ID card.

The amount of credit provided to students by online shops is typically higher than the credit offered by banks. Xiao-

jia's bank-issued credit card has a 2,000 yuan credit limit: the online platforms offered credit lines of 8,000 yuan and 6,000 yuan per month.

Parents opposed the new trend, citing concerns that they will be forced to cover their children's debts when the students fail to pay. Others pointed out the risk of phishing sites and identity theft.

An accountant at a Beijing bank told *Beijing Youth Daily* that the students' personal information may change once they graduate. Banks and online platforms may have a hard time getting their money back in the end. ■

## CHINESE STOCK INDEXES

## SSE (Shanghai)

Close	Change	YTD
3,617.06	▲ 48.59 (1.36%)	+11.82%

## SZSE (Shenzhen)

Close	Change	YTD
12,609.84	▲ 326.08 (2.65%)	+14.48%

## HSI (Hong Kong)

Close	Change	YTD
22,500.22	▲ 311.96 (1.41%)	-4.6%

Accurate to market close on November 19, 2015





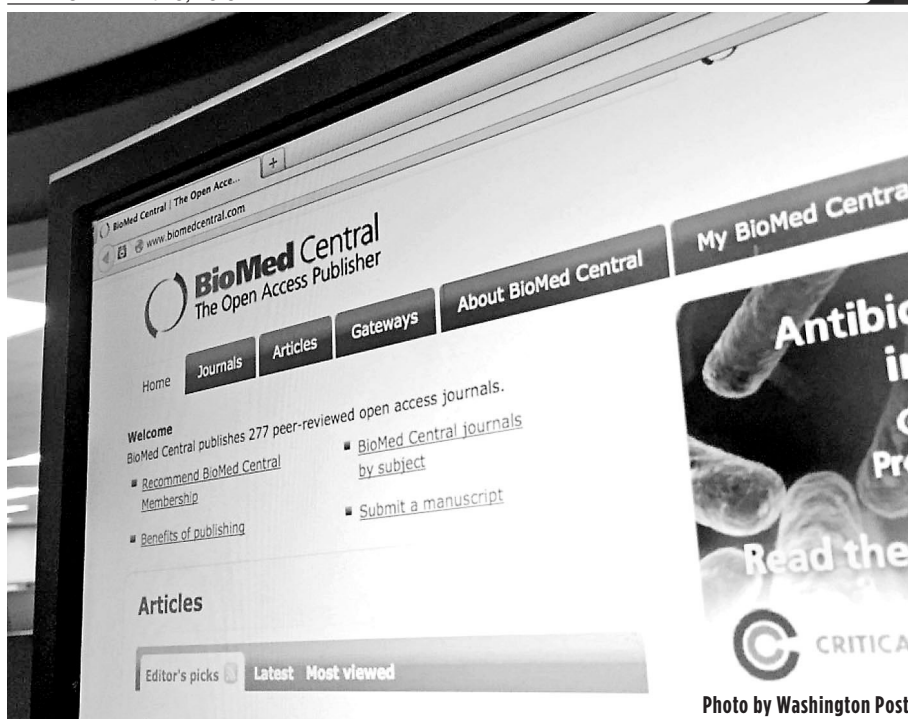


Photo by Washington Post

# Bogus Peer Reviews Cast Doubt on Chinese Scientific Papers

BY YANG XIN

**C**hinese scholars have found a new means of fabricating their academic achievements. In March, the London-based BioMed Central, a major publisher of scholarly medical and science articles, retracted 43 papers citing “reviews from fabricated reviewers.”

Forty-one of the papers were written by scholars in China. In August, Berlin-based Springer announced the retraction of 64 articles from its publications, most of which were submitted from China. In October, nine Chinese papers were retracted from five Elsevier journals.

In total, more than 100 papers published internationally were pulled during 2015.



Photo by China Network

The stunning rate resulted in a joint investigation by the China Association for Science and Technology, National Natural Science Foundation of China and several working units of scholars whose papers had been retracted. The investigation uncovered an underground, packaged service chain that involved

ghostwriting, proxy voting and fabricated peer-review reports.

Peer review is the vetting process that guarantees the integrity of scholarly articles by using expert screeners as a gateway to publication. Experts' opinion, to a large extent, determines whether the papers can be published.

However, by practicing fabricated peer-review, the contact details for peer reviewers actually route requests from review back to the researchers themselves.

“We have found third parties who offer fabricated peer-reviews reports. They used bogus email addresses created by themselves to replace those of peer-reviewers and to fabricate peer-review reports,” Huang Boyun, vice chairman of China Association for Science and Technology, told Xinhua News.

And there is more.

“Among the writers whose papers were retracted, some turned out to have signed two contracts with the third party, most of which were surviving under the cloak of language service companies. The public contract was signed under the service term of text decoration; the secret one was for ghostwriting services, Xinhua News reported.

“There are scientific paper writers who lack self-discipline or simply have no awareness of the rules. Some lack basic recognition of scientific standards and the integrity of the peer-review process,” a spokesperson for the Human Resource Department of China Association for Science and Technology told Xinhua.

“There is no domestic law on the supervision of third parties in the field of ‘scientific article services’ or any self-regulatory organizations within the industry. This is why it’s possible to have such a chaotic scientific paper submission circle,” he said.

Other experts blame China’s academic appraisal system.

“Chinese scholars are blindly focused on the number of papers they can publish in international journals. The quantity should not be the only metric for appraising academic achievement. Some international journals are surviving entirely on the submission fees paid by Chinese scholars,” said Yang Wei, senior counselor of the Science and Technology Committee at China National Nuclear Corporation. ■

## Non-Beijing Athlete Faces Retirement Without Payout

BY YANG XIN



Photo by Xinhua

**A**fter serving on the Beijing Diving Team and winning national medals for 11 years, Huo Sizhong, 23, a former diver from Guangdong province, is still missing one award: a Beijing hukou, the permanent residency that affords its bearers a slew of benefits.

In Huo’s case, those benefits amount to hundreds of thousands of yuan in ‘discharge bonus’ after retirement.

According to the Human Resource Department of the Beijing Sports Bureau, the ‘discharge bonus’ is only offered to retired athletes with Beijing registered residence.

“There are cases in which outsiders can be allocated a Beijing hukou through the capital’s exceptional talents’ introduction policy, but the number is shrinking. The Beijing Municipal Human Resources and Social Security Bureau has been tightening up the quota and only the best players can settle down with a hukou,” said a spokesperson for the bureau surnamed Ling.

“Apart from Huo, we have many athletes from outside Beijing – some are even national champions – and all of them are still waiting for a Beijing hukou.”

Huo Sizhong had his best performance and was the third place winner of the 2010 National Diving Championships. In 2009 and 2013, Huo took part in the National Games on behalf of the Beijing Diving team and clinched the fifth place. The achievements, however, were hardly remarkable in Beijing’s highly competitive diving team. For years, Huo never became an official athlete in-system.

“It is not that the Bureau withheld his ‘discharge bonus,’ it’s the fact that Huo does not meet the requirements for receiving the bonus regulated by the municipal government. Only official athletes can receive the bonus,” said Tang Bin, chief of Competitive Sports Department in Beijing Municipal Bureau of Sports, in an interview with *China Youth Daily*.

The explanation is obviously not welcomed by the large number of retired athletes from outside Beijing. As stated in the Guideline on Enhancing Athletes’ Cultural Education and Security Work issued by the State Council in 2010, retired athletes shall be granted the ‘discharge bonus’ or compensatory payment.

Ren Hai, professor of Beijing Sport University, called for a more relaxed policy in the capital’s induction of exceptional talents.

“Athletes are exceptional talents. Having spent years serving on the sports team and contributing to China’s sports cause, any retired athlete is deserving of a settlement bonus,” Ren said. ■

## 24 Villages Begin Reconstruction Project

BY DIAO DIAO

**T**he Beijing Municipal Commission of Tourism Development announced a project to develop tourism in 24 villages including Gubei Shuizhen, Lingshui village and Cuandixia.

Fang Zehua, deputy director of Beijing Municipal Commission of Tourism Development, told *Beijing Youth Daily* there are 52 traditional villages in 11 districts that retain most of their ancient features.

“The 24 villages listed in the new project have unique characteristics, rich travel resources, a strong reputation and convenient transportation,” Fang said.



Photo by CFP

Eleven villages in the list are located in Mentougou district west of Beijing. These keep the traditional Beijing yard struc-

tures and room orientations known as yijin, erjin, sanjin and sijin.

A small yard with several rooms is known as an yijin. If it has other yards behind the first yard and there are also many rooms in the second yard, it’s an erjin yard. Sanjin and sijin have more yards and rooms.

Fang Zehua said experts are visiting the 24 villages to research and prepare for the reconstruction.

In Miyun, some abandoned houses have been changed into farmhouse hotels with modern facilities on the interior and a traditional facade. ■



# Delivery Company Sued for Discriminatory Hiring

BY DIAO DIAO

A woman surnamed Ma recently sued EMS for discriminatory hiring practices when the company refused to honor its contract with her on account of her gender.

Ma, a new college graduate, applied for the delivery position earlier this year. The job opening posted online said the company was looking for a male between the ages of 18 and 45.

The company told Ma it never employed a female delivery agent, but that it would give her a chance if she proved herself during the two-day trial period.

Ma took a physical exam and went to the company offices to sign her employment contract. However, the company told her should have to wait a week for the contract.

During the week the company called her to tell her she would not be employed because of her gender.

Ma sued the company for gender discrimination because delivery work is not one of China's prohibited professions for female workers.

According to Chinese Labor Law, female workers are not allowed to be employed as miners or in other jobs considered Level 4 in terms of labor intensity. The article detailing Prohibited Work for Female Workers states that female workers are not allowed to do jobs that require lifting 20 kilograms six times per day, or which require lifting heavy loads of 25 kilograms or more.

A Shunyi District court sided with Ma, saying the delivery company must pay her 8,500 yuan as compensation for its discriminatory hiring. However, it did not command the company to reverse its decision not to hire Ma. ■



Photo by CFP

## Police Recover 30M Yuan from Text Message Scammers

BY YANG XIN

Beijing Police recently busted a local Internet company for providing network services to scam artists. The bust ended in 30 arrests, recovered 30 million yuan and solved as many as 700 cases involving text message scams.

Beijing News said it was the first major case solved since the government created a special unit to handle network and telecommunication crimes.

The Beijing Municipal Public Security Bureau said such fraud cases are fairly common. Most text messages appear to be from popular reality TV shows and encourage recipients to click the links, enter their personal information and pay a certain amount in exchange for a prize.

In July, Beijing police captured a scammer surnamed Su who was operating out of Guang-

dong province. Su hired China 8U, an Internet company in Zhangzhou, Fujian province, to develop phishing websites, handle domain registration and site operation.

China 8U was founded in 2006. During the past few years, it had expanded nationwide with a headquarters in Beijing and branch offices in cities such as Zhangzhou and Xiamen.

Police said the company's marketing team contacted fraudsters. It then assigned its IT staff to register and maintain phishing websites fraud schemes while the sales team promoted itself online to attract more possible clients.

The investigation is still ongoing. Ge Lei, a lawyer at the Beijing Yingke Law Firm, said suspects could face charges of fraud and may be sentenced to anywhere between a decade to life imprisonment. ■

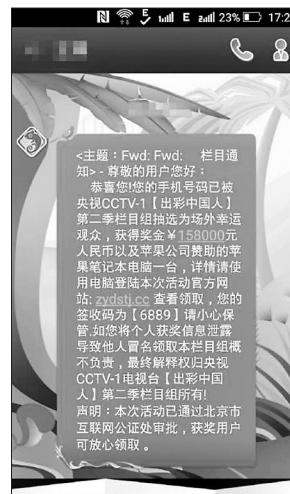


Photo by Legal Evening News

## City to Publish Detailed Account of Gov's Power, Responsibilities

BY WANG YAN

The Beijing government is preparing to publish a detailed account of the government's power and its responsibilities to allow more transparency and public supervision.

Sun Shizhu, the deputy director of Beijing's committee of organization, held a press conference on November 18 to explain the list. Sun said it involves 2,428 items of government power of 45 government bureaus. The list will be open to residents, companies and organizations.

Sun said another detailed account on

the government's responsibility will also be published. The responsibility list is to clarify each bureau's responsibility to prevent agencies from avoiding their responsibility, said Liu Yuanguang, director of the committee.

Sun gave the government's responsibility to curb air pollution as one example. Sun said there are six administration items under the responsibility to curb air pollution. Each government bureau, from the environment bureau to neighborhood commissions, all have respon-

sibilities, Sun said.

Sun said the list also informs the public of the proper place to complain when a bureau fails to fulfill its responsibility.

Beijing has canceled and simplified 439 approval procedures and has simplified government work by 45 percent, Liu said.

The government opened a new service hall on November 9 by Liuliqiao. The service hall features 40 government departments and 400 approval procedures can be completed there. ■



### Students Hire Substitutes to Sit Class

Beijing college students are hiring other bodies to occupy their class seats for days, weeks and in some cases entire semesters.

Substitute students can earn as much as 1,000 yuan per month by sitting in four to five classes per week. Most substitutes charge 70 yuan per class and help students to sign in during roll call. A photo of the substitute in the classroom is provided as evidence of attendance.

There are more than 700 online groups offering substitute student services. The most popular classes for substitution are English, Chinese, Marxist philosophy and physical education.

(Tencent News)

### Guangxi Driver Fined for Nap Breaks on Highway

A truck driver surnamed Huang in Guangxi has been repeatedly fined 2,400 yuan as an "overtime penalty" for taking two more hours to finish his turnpike trip than the average driver.

Huang said he takes a nap at the service station whenever he drives the Nanning-Pingxiang Turnpike to relieve the stress of road commutes.

Overtime penalties are issued on several major highways, including ones that cross the provinces of Hebei, Shandong, Gansu and Heilongjiang.

(Ifeng News)

### Hohhot Couriers Swap Scooters for Horses

In an effort to curb the city's growing traffic dangers, the Hohhot city government banned the use of electric scooters on October 16. But that left the city's couriers without a way to make their deliveries.

The answer came in equine form.

Dozens of horses were brought into the city from the surrounding grasslands to make deliveries after Single's Day. A number of pictures of couriers on horseback have been circulating on the Internet ever since.

(Tencent News)

### Swindlers Pose as Police, Extort Brothel Patrons

A 40-year-old man surnamed Fu was held by fake police and fined when he attempted to exit a Brothel in Xi'an.

The men wearing police uniforms followed Fu to his car and threatened to notify his family if he did not pay a 5,000 yuan fine. They walked him to the nearest ATM and forced him to withdraw 4,000 yuan before letting him go.

Suspecting he had been scammed, Fu reported the case to the actual police.

Two months later, police arrested three men surnamed Cheng, Ma and Tan who pleaded guilty to impersonating officers. Cheng and Ma were sentenced to 14 months in prison and fined 5,000 yuan. Tan was sentenced to one year in prison and fined 5,000 yuan.

(Tencent News)





Photo by CFP

# MI Hides Blunders Behind High Sales Figures

BY SHU PENGQIAN



Photo by b2b.hc360.com

**T**he online shopping fest that is Single's Day has come to an end, and Chinese merchants are posting record profits.

In the early hours of November 12, Lei Jun, the president of handset and smart device maker MI, announced that the company's handsets were the top sellers on Alibaba's Tmall during Single's Day.

Twenty minutes later, Lei posted another Weibo announcement claiming MI handsets were also the top sellers on JD.com and Suning, two other Chinese online retailers.

MI's remarkable achievement helped to prop up its poor business performance in 2015 and suspend rumors that the brand is becoming obsolete.

MI has faced such criticism since its founding in April 2010, when ex-CEO of Kingsoft and creator of Zhuoyue.com Lei Jun set out to make affordable, high-end phones. The company's first Android-based handset, running its own MIUI interface, went on sale on August 16, 2011.

The company has struggled to prove itself since the initial media buzz died down.

It quickly released new smartphones and other products such as the Mi Note and Redmi line of products. It also stepped into other smart home industries to produce a MI TV set-top box and air purifier in 2013 and 2014.

The company has a significant Chinese market presence and a steady group of

devoted customers. But the brand is definitely facing difficulties.

According to data from Baidu House, MI sold 340,000 smartphones on Tmall during 2013's Single's Day for 553 million yuan; it sold 1.16 million in 2014 for 1.56 billion; and this year it sold 1.03 million smartphones for 740 million yuan. The remaining profits came from sales of TVs and accessories.

If looking at sales volume alone, MI's performance appears to be ideal. But the conclusion becomes different when comparing only 2014 and 2015: MI stopped developing.

Market research agency Canalys said in its latest report that Huawei displaced MI as the top smartphone seller in the Chinese market. All evidence suggests MI is hitting a bottleneck.

## Unstable Fan Base

The success of MI owes a tremendous debt to the company's marketing.

Vice president of MI Li Wanqiang said he was hired to get the most attention for the least cost.

To achieve this, he and other MI employers registered lots of accounts in different discussion forums to start threads about MI products. The guerilla marketing tactic brought many users who it quickly turned into dedicated fans.

MI held its first MI Fan's Day on April 6, 2011. Fan's Day, now held on April 8 each

year, offers MI fans heavy discounts on the company's products. Li also developed an online forum to give MI users a chance to interact with staff.

Enlisting the fans to promote the brand helped the fledgling MI retain customers and expand its presence in the domestic market. But as time went on, the strategy proved less useful.

With so many smartphone makers entering the industry, relying on corporate culture is hardly enough to retain Chinese users who are more focused on quality, appearance and price.

Even diehard customers have little opinion about MI's phones. "MI's smartphones are not good at dissipating heat or responding quickly to touch," one MI user surnamed Shen said. "The visual aesthetic is also lacking."

Product quality is critical to any company, but it's an area where MI has fallen behind other smartphone makers.

## Changed Profit Pattern

MI's distribution pattern used to be one of the brand's distinguishing features. Customers could only purchase MI products on its website instead of in a real store. When a new MI smartphone was going to be released, customers needed to reserve the new smartphone on the MI website, and MI fans were given first dibs.

The strategy allowed MI to avoid the

cost of hiring sales staff or buying floor space in stores. It also served customers' vanity, because users who were lucky enough to get the latest MI phone enjoyed a feeling of exclusivity.

But few users have the patience to regularly purchase smartphones this way – especially when Huawei and Meizu are constantly available alternatives.

Fierce market competition has forced MI to change its model, and today it sells its phones on Tmall, JD.com, Suning and other e-commerce platforms. On September 12, MI opened its first brand store in Beijing. The flagship store charges more for MI phones than MI's own website, and that's a tough pill for MI fans to swallow.

## MI's Future

In the current smartphone market, the only way a company can truly stand out is if it develops its own chips.

By the end of 2014, MI's smartphones relied completely on chips from Qualcomm and MediaTek. The dependence greatly restricts MI's operations.

An article on Baidu Baijia noted that the MI3 phone's notorious delay was due to a delayed shipment of chips.

By the end of 2014, MI became determined to cooperate with Leadcore Technology to set up Pinecone Electronics and produce its own smartphone chips. Its first self-made chip is expected to come to the market next year. ■





CFP Photos

# Teachers of Left-behind Kids Forgotten by Educators

BY YANG XIN

**C**hina has approximately 60 million left-behind children living in the countryside. As many as two of every five children of the countryside have been left behind by their parents, according to a recent report by the All-China Women's Federation.

These children depend on 3.3 million rural teachers for their education, according to official statistics. But those teachers may soon find themselves left behind by the system that put them there.

## Investment Bias

The nation's growing trend of urbanization has split its teaching resources along an urban-rural divide. But teachers too are favoring the cities in search of more fulfilling careers.

For the past few decades, the central government has spent tens of billions of yuan supporting rural education by constructing new buildings and purchasing education facilities. Li Qiyong, deputy head of Guizhou Provincial Education Department, once told *China Youth Daily* that more than 4 percent of annual GDP has been invested in national education since 2013.

"In 1986, the year I became a teacher, all my school had was one teaching building. Now we have tracks, microcomputer classrooms and standardized laboratories," Cun Mu, headmaster of a primary school in rural Anhui province told China News.

But compared to the considerable amount of money thrown into teaching facilities, the amount allocated to rural teachers' salaries has been pitiful.

## Rough Schooling

On a field visit to a rural middle school in Henan, a group of students told UNESCO that they were not attracted to the teaching profession as they felt that teachers were not respected, were over-worked and earned too little.

A research group led by Lei Wanpeng from Central China Normal University conducted a survey of rural teachers' salaries in 2013 and found more than 75 percent of rural teachers earned less than 30,000 yuan per year.

"We used to earn two or three times more than migrant workers, but nowadays, their wages are two or three times higher than ours," Lei's report quoted rural teachers as saying.

In a study by 21st Century Education Research Institute, only 39 percent of rural teachers enjoyed full social security benefits, and more than 85 percent of rural teachers were never granted the benefit of a free physical exam.

The excessive workload of rural teachers is not to be overlooked. Not only do the teachers preside over different classes in different grades, they also undertake many non-teaching responsibilities. Most rural teachers work more than 12 hours per day, according to the report.

Aside from salary, an increasingly urgent dilemma faced by rural teachers is the limited chance of promotion due to school structure. This is especially problematic since professional titles are used to determine one's salary in the education sector.

Liu said teacher salaries are pegged to professional titles, which in turn are determined by a school's size and its students' scores. The poorer the village, the less a teacher can hope to advance.

"Those who fail to access to build their careers are seen as losers by both their peers and students," Liu Xieping, director of Teachers' Training Center in Zhangjiajie Education Bureau said to China Comment.

At demonstrative senior high schools, as many as 35 percent of teacher can apply for higher professional titles. In normal senior high schools, middle schools and primary schools, the percentage is 25 percent, 10 percent and none.



Teachers are also suffering from an aging problem.

Many rural teachers are now in their late 40s or early 50s. Back in the 1980s and 1990s, these teachers were pulled from private schools to shore up the number of rural teachers. In recent years, they have been retiring in large numbers.

## Provincial Actions

This June, the State Council announced its Rural Teachers Supporting Plan (2015-2020) to encourage young college graduates to work in the countryside. The plan grants rural teachers preferential policies for career advancement and raises salaries for rural teachers to achieve parity with other public servants.

The newly announced plan would purportedly offer rural teachers decent salaries and career security.

The Gansu Provincial Educational Department announced its own local Support Plan for rural teachers, stating that rural teachers in the province will enjoy a salary bump of 500 to 1,000 yuan, and that class teachers will be given subsidies and traffic allowances.

Jiangxi province allocated more than 600 million yuan as special funding to improve rural teachers' subsidies and housing allowances, and to enhance rural teachers' training projects. Hebei province has enacted measures to make teaching jobs more attractive.

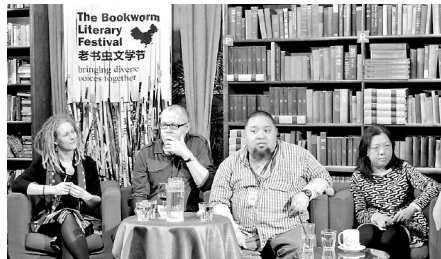
While a good start, more down-to-earth details will be required if the government's latest blueprint is to become a reality. ■





# Couple Finds Outlet in Beijing for Creative Passions, Marriage

BY SIMINA MISTREANU



Photos Courtesy of Dave Cooper and Liz Ashforth

Dave Cooper and Liz Ashforth met one night in the fall of 2004. They were both studying for their PhDs at Newcastle University in Great Britain. Hers was in biology; his was in computer science.

A common friend introduced them briefly during a rock music club event. But the friend kept talking to Dave, and by the time he finished, Liz was gone. The next time he saw her, a few weeks later, he positioned himself at the bar so that he could talk to her without interruptions. They soon began dating.

As they got to know each other, Dave kept telling Liz about his experience taking a gap year after high school, in 1996. He taught English at a school in Neijiang, Sichuan province, and had the time of his life discovering Chinese culture and Neijiang's underground nightlife. As they became closer, the discussions turned from "this is what I did" to "we should go to China together."

So when Liz got a job offer from the Chinese Academy of Sciences at the end of her PhD program, she couldn't wait to tell Dave.

"I sat Dave down and said, 'We're coming to China. You're coming with me,'" she says.

## Improv

They moved to Beijing in 2009. She arrived a month before Dave, who was visiting friends in Vietnam and Malaysia. That first month, while Liz was reading an expat magazine, she saw an ad for Beijing Improv's weekly workshops. She circled the ad, thinking Dave would love it.

She had spotted what would become a favorite pastime, passion and entrance into one of Beijing's many artistic communities.

Improv, also known as improvisational theater, is a form of theater that is created in the moment it is performed. Invented in the US and Canada in the 1950s to the 1970s, improv is now played by groups around the world.

Dave had started training with an improv troupe in Newcastle upon Tyne just a few months before leaving for China. When he arrived in Beijing, both he and Liz joined Beijing Improv.

"It definitely kick-started our social life, helped us make friends extremely quickly," Liz says.

Dave joined an English-language group, and Liz joined a bilingual group. They soon discovered that improv networks span several Asian countries. They traveled, participated in improv festivals and made friends in Manila, Shanghai, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Besides being relaxing and fun, improv principles can be applied to other areas such as business, therapy or disaster preparedness. Improv teaches you to say yes, accept what you have been given and build upon it, Dave says. It helps to alleviate anxiety about the future and about life's unpredictability.

The couple found that doing improv and living in a foreign country were complementary. It helped them ease into their Chinese experience.

Looking back at why he wanted to return to China in the first place, Dave says it was because of people's friendliness but also because of the freedom he experienced here.

"The freedom to choose what you want to do, accompanied by relative financial security is quite a powerful aphrodisiac," he says. "But having thought about it a lot more, I wonder how much of that freedom I believe is afforded only because I'm a foreigner in

another country."

## Life and Work

That's not to say there weren't culture shocks. Liz, who was screening marine bacteria in search of new antibiotics at the Institute of Microbiology in Haidian district, found the work culture to be very different from her PhD program back in the UK.

In the UK, she worked mostly by herself and rarely consulted one of her busy supervisors. In Beijing, she was the only foreigner among approximately 40 Chinese researchers. Everybody had time for her, but she also had to request permission for every relevant move she made.

Dave in the meantime found work teaching video game design and development at Beihang University and editing scientific papers. He also became involved in a hard rock band, Red Pirates, along with three other Chinese musicians.

Toward the end of Liz's two-year work contract, the Institute of Microbiology along with a foreign laboratory organized an international conference with about 500 participants. Liz, being the only foreigner in her laboratory, became the go-between person between the two parties. She coordinated the publishing companies, wrote the program, designed the student workshops, wrote press releases and designed the logo.

"I found that was really, really great, being in that middle ground and helping people achieve things," she said.

She discovered her passion for event planning and decided to pursue it.

She has since organized cultural, educational and improv events. She has held training sessions in aquaponics, which are systems that combine raising aquatic animals and cultivating plants in water. During this year's Beijing Design Week she designed an environmental project complete with recycled materials, a bamboo waterway and bike-generated electricity.

Alongside his work at the university, Dave started developing his own video games. He also built the Mozilla Web Forward accelerator with a partner in London. About six months ago, he left his teaching job and joined a game developing company, and later a start-up. He has just submitted his latest video game, Blockships, to the Independent Games Festival in California.

This variety of creative projects would not have been possible in their home country, the couple says. Beijing is a creative melting pot, and one that's welcoming to newcomers.

"There's live music everywhere, there's art installations, there's theater, there's so much going on, and if you want to get involved in it as an expat, you just have to say the word and suddenly it happens," Dave says. "Try and do that in any other city, and there's already 10,000 people established."

The same opportunities are available to Chinese, they say. And Chinese-only artistic groups are usually welcoming to outsiders.

"Language doesn't matter in those cases, only enthusiasm," Liz says.

The couple says the challenges they overcame here have made them stronger. In 2014, they married.

But in mid-December, they're moving back to the UK. They want to have children and raise them away from Beijing's polluted air. They also want to live closer to their families.

"The third reason is one we probably didn't think about, but it's probably the most important one," Dave says. "And that's that it's time to face the next adventure. We got comfortable in Beijing, and it's time to shake things up a bit." ■





# ‘Remember the Future’ with German Film Festival

BY WANG YAN

**G**erman Films and the Goethe-Institut China are hosting the 3rd Festival of German Cinema. The festival opened on November 13 and will continue through November 30.

It opened with the award-winning German movie *Victoria* (2015), directed by Sebastian Schipper, starring Laia Costa and Frederick Lau, at Audi City in Beijing. The Silver Bear winner at the 65th Berlin International Film Festival follows a young woman's adventures in Berlin.

The 17-day festival will tour Beijing, Chengdu, Qingdao and Shenzhen under the theme “Remember the Future.” Several of the films examine German history and record real people's lives.

Directed by Buhan Qurbani, *We Are Young. We Are Strong* tells a story about

xenophobia in Germany in 1992. The story is told via the struggles of three characters: Lien, a Vietnamese woman who settled in Germany while fighting for her life, wonders if it will ever be a home for her; Stefan and his friends were young and angry boys who look forward to nightly riots and clash with police and foreigners; Stefan's father is an ambitious local politician trapped in between his career and his ideals.

The festival will also screen *Elser*, a film released this year, about George Elser's failed attempt to assassinate Adolf Hitler. During Elser's confinement, he recalled the events leading up to his plot and his reason for deciding to take such drastic action.

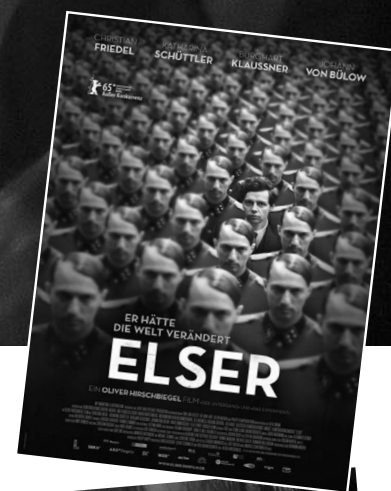
Phoenix, another film released this year tells the story of a married couple torn apart by the war and unable to find each other.

Directed by Christian Petzold, the film is a spellbinding mystery of identity, illusion and deception that unfolds against the turmoil of post-World War II Germany.

Other films include *The Lies of Vectors*, *Tour de Force* and *Who Am I*.

In addition to screening the movie, German actors Joel Basman and Antoine Monot Jr will hold a fan meet and question session during the festival.

In a press release for the festival, German Ambassador to China Michael Clauss wrote, “The festival brings a selection of films to China which combine a look backward into our history with insights into German society today. The diversity and vitality it shows is the result of an active film scene in Germany, which creatively turns towards international competition and cooperation.” ■



IMDb photos

## The Chieftains Travel to China

BY SIMINA MISTREANU



Photo by gewara.com

**T**he Embassy of Ireland along with the Consulate General of Ireland, Wyeth Nutrition and Culture Ireland have brought the Chieftains to China.

The Chieftains are a traditional Irish band formed in Dublin in November 1962. The band's music is almost entirely instrumental and focused on the uilleann pipes, Ireland's national bagpipes. Over the decades, Chieftain's music has become almost synonymous with traditional Irish music.

The band's initial members were Paddy Moloney, Sean Potts and Michael Tubridy. Moloney still plays in the band today, along with Sean Keane, Kevin Conneff and Matt Molloy.

The Chieftains became popular in the US when they started releasing their records on the American market in the 1970s. They worked on the

Academy-Award winning soundtrack of Stanley Kubrick's 1975 film *Barry Lyndon*.

But their work achieved global success with the release of their 1988 album *Irish Heartbeat*. They subsequently collaborated with many famous musicians including Madonna, Rolling Stones and Luciano Pavarotti.

In 1989, the Irish government awarded them the honorary title of “Ireland's Musical Ambassadors.”

The band has won six Grammy awards and a Lifetime Achievement Award at the BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards in 2002. In 2012, they celebrated their 50th anniversary with the release of the record *Voice of Ages*.

The band played on November 17 at the Forbidden City Concert Hall in Beijing and on November 18 at the Shanghai Symphony Hall. ■





**C**ity Youth Club is organized by Beijing Youth Camp International and Beijing Beiqing Education Media to inherit and popularize the capital's traditional culture.

The club is mostly made of members of international agencies, embassies and domestic institutions.

Activity locations are not fixed. The City Youth Club selects its locations according to the content of each game. Houhai, Sanlitun and other places of interest are given priority.

Among the club's competitive games is the especially popular American game The Amazing Race. Games are designed to consider trends in international education, Chinese culture and youth camp culture.

City Youth Club offers many activities that allow participants to experience Beijing's culture. Hidden City Game is the most distinctive.

### About Hidden City Game

The club has hosted nine Hidden City Game events, each with a different theme. The 10th Hidden City Game begins on November 22 and will focus on the theme of art.

This time, locals and expats are invited to participate in an exciting exploration and adventure challenge around the Gulou area. Gulou is an artistic center with many unusual bars and cafes. For this event, City Youth Club has designed diverse competitive games and questions related to painting, design, photography and other arts.

Participants will start at Modernista, a Parisian-styled bar, located at 44 Baochao Hutong off East Gulou Avenue.

Teams of two to four persons will pick a set of instructions and questions, then walk the nearby areas and artistic sites to search for answers. Experienced competitors must finish within 2.5 hours; newcomer teams can spend up to four hours on the event.

Teams finish back at the same café for marking and post-event entertainment. A trophy and 14 prizes from sponsors will be distributed to the best teams. The total value of the prizes will be 7,000 to 9,000 yuan.

Participants can register for the event through WeChat. Registration costs 70 yuan per person.

Hidden City Game allows participants to experience the history, beauty and culture of Beijing; to connect with friends and colleagues; and win prizes, such as meals, drinks and SPA treatments. ■

(By Shu Pengqian)

# Hidden City Game at City Youth Club

